

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Rhia Malhotra, and I am from Sharon, Massachusetts.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

As a child of immigrants, I recognize that, growing up in this country, I am privileged in many ways. Due to my medical insurance, I rarely have to worry about getting any necessary procedures or operations covered. I am extremely grateful for this.

But this is not something that I believe I've earned simply by being born in the U.S. I've seen my friends struggle with concerns about medical coverage and I would never wish that on anyone else, regardless of immigration status. I believe that removing that worry for people under 18 is not only humane, but would improve the quality of life for the communities in which they live and work. People who are not worried about medical coverage can afford to be more ambitious when searching for jobs, or pursuing education. I see this as beneficial to everyone.

HUSKY has already ensured that children under 9 years of age have access to medical assistance. Long term, I would prefer everyone had access to medical care. But in the meantime, expanding access to medical assistance by giving people under 19 years of age through HUSKY is a step in the right direction to a more humane and well-functioning society.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Rhia Malhotra